1: Allen H-4. (no date) 1932 R11 Georgia R11

Shooes and in a word in all things most necessary for Man's use. There were all sorts of Grocery and Pothecary's Ware, Spices, Perfumes, Drugs and all manner of Oyntments. So that the vessel seemed to be a little Town, where everything was to be had." [1]

Almost all the foreign trade was transacted by barter, and both Chardin and Pitton de Tournefort found that the people preferred to be paid for goods in stuffs and trinkets rather than in currency.

The long period of perpetual contact, both commercial and political, with their powerful Mussulman neighbours had a profound effect on the peoples of the Caucasus. The more highly civilized Georgians and Armenians, strong in the antique traditions of East Christian culture, were outwardly affected in modes and habits and some ways of thought; the peoples of the mountains, who had not by the fifteenth century emerged from the tribal state, forgot their thin Christianity and became Muslim in culture as well as in outward fashion. Not only did Islam penetrate the remoter valleys of Circassia, but it became the religion of the relatively civilized Meskhians and Abkhaz.[2]

The easy religious casuistry of the Georgian princes was natural to them as well as convenient to their political interests. In the seventeenth century the old mediæval culture of Christendom, which had flourished in the Kingdom of Georgia, was half-forgotten, and it was only the more sensitive spirits who were prepared still to make sacrifices in the memory of its tradition. The new architecture of Tiflis, in the Mukhranian days, was altogether in the Muslim style; dress, manners, furnishing, were Persian. The position of women was also affected and Chardin noted a tendency, since the Persian rule began in Tiflis, towards the seclusion of women. They went veiled in the streets, while in the country districts, where there were no Mussulmans, they still adhered to the Christian custom.[3]

The travellers of the seventeenth century are none too generous in their appraisal of the Georgian character. Chardin has a long diatribe on the Georgians, and he condemns their immorality, their drunkenness, their knavery and their arrogance. But even he admits, by contrary, that "*they are Civil and Courteous and more than that, they are Grave and Moderate*".[4]

[1] Chardin, p. 75.
[2] For the progress of Islam in Samtzkhé during the seventeenth century, see Wakhushti, *Histoire de Samtzkhé*, in Brosset, *H. de la G.*, II, i, 232–3.
[3] Chardin, p. 226.
[4] *Idem.*, p. 191.

[Constitution as of July, 1947]

[64] [65] free medical service for working people, and the provision of a wide network of health resorts for the use of the working people.

[67] Art. 134. Citizens of the Georgian SSR have the right to education.

This right is ensured by universal and compulsory elementary education; by free education up to and including the seventh grade; by a system of state stipends for students of higher educational establishments who excel in their studies; by instruction in schools being conducted in the native language, and by the organization in the factories, state farms, machine and tractor stations and collective farms of free vocational, technical and agronomic training for the working people.

[562] Art. 135. Women in the Georgian SSR are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, government, cultural, political and other public activity.

The possibility of exercising these rights is ensured by women being accorded an equal right with men to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance, and education, by state protection of the interests of mother and child, state aid to mothers of large families and unmarried mothers, maternity leave with full pay, and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens.

[563] Art. 136. Equality of rights of citizens of the Georgian SSR, irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, government, cultural, political and other activity is an inalienable law.

Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, the establishment of any direct or indirect privileges for, citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law.

[659] Art. 137. In order to ensure the citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the Georgian SSR is separated from the state, and the school from the church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognised for all citizens.

Art. 138. In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the Georgian SSR are guaranteed by law:

a) freedom of speech;
b) freedom of press;
c) freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings;
d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations.

These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organizations printing presses, stocks of paper, public buildings, the streets, communications facilities and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights.

[Constitution as of July, 1947]

666 of the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR, the Supreme Soviets of the Autonomous Republics, the Soviets of Working People's Deputies of the Autonomous Region and of the district, city, settlement and village Soviets of Working People's Deputies - are chosen by the electors on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot.

Art. 148. Elections of deputies are universal: all citizens of the Georgian SSR who have reached the age of 18, irrespective of race or nationality, sex, religion, education, domicile, social origin, property status or past activities, have the right to vote in the election of deputies, with the exception of insane persons, and people who have been convicted by a court of law and whose sentences include deprivation of electoral rights.

Every citizen of the Georgian SSR, irrespective of race or nationality, sex, religion, education, domicile, social origin, property status or past activities, is eligible for election to the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR after reaching the age of 21.

[544] Every citizen of the Georgian SSR who has reached the age of 18 is eligible for election to a local Soviet, irrespective of race or nationality, sex, religion, education, domicile, social origin, property status or past activities.

Art. 149. Elections of deputies are equal: each citizen has one vote: all citizens participate in elections on an equal footing.

[562] Art. 150. Women have the right to elect and be elected on equal terms with men.

Art. 151. Citizens serving in the Armed Forces of the USSR have the right to elect and be elected on equal terms with all other citizens.

Art. 152. Elections of deputies are direct: all Soviets of Working People's Deputies, from village and city Soviets of Working People's Deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR are elected by the citizens by a direct vote.

Art. 153. Voting at election of deputies is secret.

Art. 154. Candidates are nominated by election districts.

The right to nominate candidates is secured to public organizations and societies of the working people: Communist Party organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, youth organizations and cultural societies.

Art. 155. It is the duty of every deputy to report to his electors on his work and on the work of his Soviet of Working People's Deputies, and he may be recalled at any time upon decision of a majority of the electors in a manner established by law.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

593 [847] Svanetia. In practicing this custom, the father had full right to kill his child or let it live, according to his own choice. Among the same Svans the father also had power in the matter of the inheritance rights of his son; he could delay and even deny his son his portion of the inheritance. However, his rights were not so absolute as those of the Roman *patria potestes*. Although the [562] wife is subordinate to the husband, at the same time she has the right to possess her own capital, called *sathavno*, which is not under her husband's jurisdiction. This trait of the patriarchal family represents a usual occurrence among the peoples of the Near East.[2]

As we have just mentioned, the wife is subordinate to her husband, the performance of the work of the whole household is in her hands, and in many places she plays a prominent part in the field work. However, her personal safety[3] is guaranteed by her capital (*sathavno*), and in case she is endangered by her husband or his kin, she is protected by her kinsmen.

593 [07] The relations between the married couple are regulated by special customs. Among the Khevsurs, a husband, with the exception of the first three days, sleeps apart from his wife. The upper story of the house represents the living place of the husband; the rest of the family remain on the first floor. For the conjugal nightly visits the wife climbs the primitive stairway leading to the room of her husband. Among the other groups of the Georgian Highlanders, such separation of the spouses is not practiced. Another particularity of the Khevsur married couple is the custom of avoidance of each other in public. Husband and wife try not to be seen together in public, at which time they act coldly toward each other, concealing their real affection. This custom was in use also among the Lowlanders of Georgia not very long ago.[4] It was considered a great insult to ask a Georgian about his family. Professor Kovalevsky[5] and other investigators of the Caucasus

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[2] Koschaker: 215.
[3] See "Position of Woman."
[4] Koch: II, 290.
[5] Kovalevsky: a, I, 20.

CHAPTER VII

Sex and Religion

562. All marriage ceremonies over, the new life begins for the woman in the home of her husband. We have already explained in the section dealing with the family life of the Georgian Highlanders,* the position of a married woman in the family and all prerogatives and duties which she had to perform according to custom. Her position in the family changed for the better with the birth of her first child, especially if the child happened to be a son. We also mentioned previously the special esteem and affection which the people bestowed upon their male descendants and the facts explaining this phenomenon were brought out and discussed.

While the birth of a child improved the status of the mother, in giving her more esteem and a more honorable position in the social group, she attained this position by carrying out all customary formalities connected with the act of childbirth, which were not only rough and stern, but also endangered her life. These customs, have their origin and explanation in the special religious beliefs of the people.

The woman is regarded by the Georgian Highlanders as an unclean being, and there are many rules and customs based on this belief. She is not permitted to enter the building of the *Khati*, nor even the grounds surrounding the sanctuary. During church festivals, which are accompanied by feasts, a separate table is prepared for the women outside the precincts of the *Khati*, where they have a good time of their own.

There are many rules and taboos which regulate the woman's life. These rules, which are still maintained in the secluded Alpine regions of the Highlands, were obeyed and practiced in past times by all the groups of the Georgian nation. Although the beliefs upholding the religious separation of woman have gradually disappeared among the civilized Georgian Lowlanders

*[see cat. 116, pp57-62 --Analyst]

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

and have been abandoned by them, the feeble remnants of the past still linger in the customs of the people mechanically, without their knowing their meaning. Thus, among the Georgians of Megrelia, a woman has no right to kill a chicken or any other edible animal. If she does so, the food which she cooks from it will be regarded as unclean and not edible, and if it happens that at the time of the preparation of dinner no male is present in the home, she asks the assistance of a male member of a neighboring family and her request is readily satisfied.

The separation of the woman is especially strict in times of menstruation and child-birth, when they are carefully avoided. But when the woman is in normal state, i. e., outside the times of menstruation and child-birth, she lives at home with the whole family. This normal state of woman is called in Georgian, *sashinao kopa.*

At the time of menstruation the woman, among the Khevsurs, is given the specific name of *nabosari* and the custom of separation is called *bosloba.* During this time she lives in strict seclusion from her community, in a small hut especially built for this purpose and called *samrevlo,* or *bosseli.*[1] The Russian investigator, V. A. Gurko-Kriajin, relates an interesting episode which happened to a Georgian teacher in Khevsuria. "They told us," writes the author,[2] "about the experience of a Georgian who came as a teacher to Khevsuria. When the winter began the inhabitants of the village categorically demanded that his wife must live apart from him, in the *samrevlo,* during her monthly periods. In order to avoid complying with the request, the teacher announced that his wife was expecting a child and therefore had no menstruation, and in the springtime he secretly left the village."

Every village in Khevsuria has a number of *samrevlos.* The families who are rich enough build their own huts. The women of the poor families possess one *samrevlo* jointly. It may occur, although seldom, that the poor women construct the huts themselves, without any help from the men. But generally the *samrevlo* is built by men, who may belong to any community or

[1] Urbneli.
[2] Gurko-Kriajin: 281.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

part of Georgia and much easier of access, do not have customs as rigid as those of the Khevsurs and Pshavs. The Tush women with monthly issue do not leave their homes, but instead of a *samrevlo* the Tushes make a special addition to the house for the woman in question.

Not only the person of the menstruating woman is regarded as unclean, but also the place of her stay and all objects which are used by her in the time of separation are unclean, and every contact with them is believed to make a man unclean also. Even to pass by or look in the direction of the place of her stay is believed to be enough to make a man unclean and unfitted to enter the sanctuary, depriving him of the support and protection of the patron saint of the community and making his every enterprise a failure. Consequently it is decreed by custom that before every undertaking the man has to cease intercourse with the woman whose nearness pollutes him, and he must prepare himself in order to be clean by the special rules of abstention and purification.

The best example of this is found in the customs of the Svans. According to their beliefs, hunting is a sacred affair,[5] and consequently a hunter has to live a clean life. He has no right to have intercourse with any strange woman but only with his legitimate wife. Even with his own wife he is obliged to cease these relations one day before the hunting expedition. He may not start on the hunt when someone of his womenfolk has a monthly issue, nor even if any woman in his neighborhood is in a similar condition at the time. The Svans believed that a hunter could be successful on his expedition only if he abstained from sexual intercourse and also avoided the proximity of a mother with a newborn babe until they were purified.[6]

Although the customs regulating the relations with the female sex were strict for every male member of the community, even more was required of the attendants and servants of the sanctuary. Thus the shepherds of the *sakhato* flocks—the flocks of the famous sanctuary, *Thamar mepe,* in Pshavia—who were chosen from the members of the congregation for a certain period of time for the

[5] This subject is described in detail in the chapter dealing with Contract.
[6] Dmitriev: 167.

[loc cit 114, pp 91-93 - - Analyst]

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

service of the communal sanctuary, were obliged to abstain from intercourse with women during the whole time of their occupation, in order to be clean and worthy of their sacred work in the eyes of the patron saint of the sanctuary. And as for the immediate attendants of the *Khati*, such as the *khutsi*, *dekanozi*, *khevisberi*, *dasturi*, *shulta*, and *mnate*, they are obliged to prepare themselves for every church festival and to lead a pure life of chastity before and during the church holidays. The rigidity of the requirements increases with the rank of the attendants in the service of the *Khati*. Thus, the *shultas* and *mnates* are required to cease relations with their wives for four weeks prior to every church holiday lest they be unclean for their holy service. The requirements for the *dasturi* are more strict than those for the *shultas*. The *dasturi* not only are forbidden to go near their wives for the period of four weeks before the holidays, but they are not even permitted to pass near a *samrevlo*, lest they become unclean. The *khutsis*, *khevis-beris* and *dekanozis* are obliged to be examples of purity and chastity for the entire congregation. Besides abstaining from intercourse with their wives for four weeks, as the other attendants of the *Khati* are required to do, before every church holiday they have to prepare themselves for the holy office with special fasting and baths. They are not allowed to pass near a *samrevlo*,[4] or even look toward one from a distance, and if they accidentally come near a *samrevlo* they must turn their face away from it and pass by, looking in another direction, because even a look would be enough, according to the beliefs of the people, to make them unclean and unfit for the sacred services in the *Khati*.

These regulations are scrupulously followed at the present time. For example, the Russian investigator, V. A. Gurko-Kriajin, who visited the country of the Khevsurs in the summer of 1927, was an eye-witness of the above-mentioned customs. "It is interesting to note," writes Mr. Gurko-Kriajin,[5] that the men not only are forbidden to visit these women's huts (the *samrevlos*), but it is not recommended to them even to pass in their vicinity. When in Shatil,[6] I myself observed a priest, the *khevis-beri* of the local

[5] Gurko-Kriajin: 281.
[6] A village in Khevsuria.

[4] [i.e., menstrual hut - Analyst]

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

sanctuary, making a great turn in his way in order that he might not pass near the *samrevlo* and thus pollute himself."

All objects and vessels used by a woman during the time of her separation in the menstrual hut (*samrevlo*) are regarded as unclean, and before returning home at the end of her abnormal state, she is obliged to scrub and clean them thoroughly. In times past they were thrown away. Besides this, she washes her clothes and takes a special bath, which among the Khevsurs is a very unusual affair.

The customs observed by the woman in time of menstruation are, comparatively, not so rigid as those required of the woman in childbed.

Pregnant women also are regarded as unclean, even in a much greater degree than those in menstruation. They are called *umretskhlo*. The woman with child tries to conceal her condition as long as possible, but when she feels the approach of the critical moment, she is obliged to leave her home and stay apart in a small hut built for the purpose and called *sachekhi* or *kokhi*. However, according to V. Bardavelidze-Lomia,[1] the term *sachekhi* connotes, not the hut itself, but a place outside the village where all the *samrevlos* and *kokhis* are located.

The word *kokhi* means, in Georgian, a hut. Unlike the *samrevlo*, it is built by women only, usually by those who are living in the *samrevlo* at the time. The *kokhi* is much smaller and simpler in structure than the *samrevlo*. Sometimes it is built adjacent to a *samrevlo*, so that one of *samrevlo's* walls is used as a wall of the *kokhi*. It is partially floored with boards and straw; there is no window or place for a fire (hearth) as in the *samrevlo*. The hut is so small that it can accommodate only one woman, allowing a small space for her baby. The whole furniture consists of a jar for water, a wooden plate for bread or other food, and the straw spread on the earthen floor, upon which the woman lies and which is called *salogine*, from the Georgian word *logini*, meaning a bed.

In the cold semi-darkness of the *kokhi* the woman bears her child; only little girls or old women are allowed to bring her food.

[1] Bardavelidze-Lomia: 247.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

and sprinkles the baby and its belongings with it, as well as the path which she used in going to the brook for water or other needs. Only after this procedure is she permitted to leave the *kokhi* and move over with her child into the *samrevlo*.

The rules of the final purification required of the woman in order to enter her home and community after childbirth are more complicated in detail. Not only the mother and her baby, but all objects used by her during the time of her separation, and even the members of her family, are regarded as unclean and are called *shereulni*,[8] and have no right to enter the *Khati* until the purification presented by custom is performed. The ceremony of purification required after the childbirth for the mother and her baby and the sanctification of her house is known as *sanathlo* or *sakhlis sanathlavi*.[9]

Two weeks after the birth of the child, the head priest of the community, the *khutsi*, kills a sheep as a sacrificial offering to God on the roof of the house. Two weeks later, about the time of the return of the mother and the baby, the same kind of sacrifice is made by the *khutsi*. At this time he catches the blood of the slain animal in a cup and sprinkles the walls, pillars, and door-posts of the house with it. Only after this ceremony is the whole family regarded as clean again and entitled to enter the *Khati*. Prior to this moment the father does not come near the baby, which is regarded as unclean as its mother.

The details of the custom of "purification" or cleansing, as observed by the Khevsurs, may be understood from the following description.[10] After moving from the *kokhi* into the *samrevlo*, the woman stays there from four to six weeks. During this time she is engaged in field work. When she returns to the house of her husband and family, she is obliged to put herself and her baby, as well as all her belongings—everything that she brings from the *samrevlo*—through the process of purification, which consists of three different parts: The first part of the purification is called in Georgian, *matusva;* it consists of the following: the woman

[8] Eristov: 114.
[9] Urbneli.
[10] Bardavelidze-Lomia: 250.

6. Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

783 562 passes everything, one after another, over the fire, and at this time she is obliged to say the words established by custom: "Fire, give thy purity." After the *matusva*, she must put the things out of the *samrevlo* and shake them well. This is the second part of the purification and is called *gamotskepa*. And at last she must sprinkle everything with holy water which is brought to her for this purpose from the home. She takes the water into her mouth and so sprinkles the things. This last part of the purification is called *shapkhukeba*.

Only after the accomplishment of all the above-mentioned tasks are the woman, her baby and belongings regarded as clean and as having the right to enter the home of her family.

278 The "holy" water which is used by the woman for the purification is the water which is blessed by the preacher during the church ceremonies in commemoration of Christ's baptism. The people take the water home and preserve it in bottles for such future use as cleansing, purifying, and medical purposes. This custom is in universal use throughout Georgia. I remember seeing such bottles in many houses. The water is regarded by the people as medicine against almost every kind of disease: such as sore eyes, stomach trouble, headache, etc.

844 562 Among the Svans also, the woman lying in childbed is regarded as unclean and is put in a separate place but not in a special hut built for her sojourn. The woman is in isolation and in considered as unclean until the priest says special prayers of purification upon her and the baby. Not only contact, as was mentioned above concerning the women in menstruation, but even the mere presence of such a woman in the neighborhood makes a hunter polluted and consequently unable to take part in the hunting expedition.

844 787 When the Khevsur woman is in travail during childbirth and her loud screams and cries are heard far from the *kokhi*, her husband and relatives approach the hut and with loud shouts fire their guns in order to keep away evil spirits. Or sometimes the husband runs into the hut, places his gun on the shoulder of his suffering wife, and shouts to her words of encouragement while firing his gun. He does this only with the aim of driving

CHAPTER IX

The Position of Woman

562 589 Discussing the cases of divorce among the Georgian Highlanders, we saw that the right of separation was possessed by man and denied to woman, although in case of the woman's innocence, the husband was requested to arrange the property settlement, as decreed by custom. From the very first day of her life woman was unfavored by her parents, who always gave preference to the male child, and attached great importance to the son of the family, the circumstance of which was clearly manifested by the Svans in the custom of killing the female children and allowing the boys to live. From her childhood woman is loaded with hard work, in her parental home as well as after marriage in the home of her husband, where she has to perform, besides the household duties, the field work also. If she becomes a widow and has no children, she returns to the home of her parents, and the relatives of her deceased husband are obliged to give her her *sathavno* (personal capital), in full, and in addition as many cows as the years of her married life, not counting the first year. The procedure is the same as in the payment of indemnity in divorce motivated by the husband.[1] If the widow prefers, she is entitled to remain in the house of her dead husband, and his relatives must take care of her.[2] With the Svans she even takes a privileged position.[3] In a case where a widow has a son, she does not marry again. "It is regarded as a shame among the Khevsurs," writes Eristov,[4] "if a widow who has a son marries again." The same information is given also by Dr. Radde: "Eine Wittwe Kann, wenn sie einen sohn hat," writes he concerning the Khevsurs,[5] "nicht die zweite Ehe schliessen, es gilt das fuer schimpflich."

[1] See "Divorce." [See p 1144, cap. III -- Analyst]
[2] Zisserman: 251.
[3] Kovalevsky: a, II, 51.
[4] Eristov: 113.
[5] Radde: d, 90.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

A woman's position in the family, and the prerogatives and duties which she has to perform, are not the same in the different groups of the Georgian Highlanders. As a general trait among them, we may mention woman's subordinate position to man; her husband is her superior, but not absolute master and lord.

The Pshav woman takes part in all kinds of work in the family life,[6] although there are some kinds of work done by men only. "In the Pshav family, where male members are present," writes Khizanashvili,[7] "the woman never cuts the grass, ploughs or takes an axe in hand."

With the Khevsurs, with the exception of the preparation of the land, tilling and ploughing, the work is accomplished by the women. "The women do most of the field work," writes Zisserman,[8] "man's part being the ploughing and mowing." The same information concerning the sexual division of labor among the Khevsurs is given by N. A. Busch also.[9] According to Eristov,[10] the mowing of grass also was executed by the women, so that only ploughing was left for men. It was also woman's obligation to bring straw and fire-wood from the far mountain slopes where it was stored. This was an especially hazardous undertaking in the winter, when all precipices and crevices were covered with deep snow. Dr. G. Radde describes this in his work dealing with the Khevsurs. "Den Maennern an Kraft stehen uebrigens die Weiber wenig nach," writes Dr. Radde.[11] "Sie sind es ja, die fast ausschliesslich arbeiten und alle Geschaefte liegen ihnen ob, mit Ausnahme des Ackerns un der Heumat. Im winter, wenn in hohen Schnee die Chewsurischen Doerfer gebettet da liegen, muss das Weib im Sommer an der Baumgrenze fertig gestellten Holzbuendel oft drei bis fier *Werst*[12] zum Hause schleppen und das auf den steilsten Kaum eingetretenen Gebirgsfaden."

With the Tushes, the woman is in a position similar to that of

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[6] Pshavia: 252.
[7] Khizanashvili: 137.
[8] Zisserman: 212.
[9] Busch: 224.
[10] Eristov: 123.
[11] Radde: d, 73.
[12] *Werst*—the Russian measure of length—0.66 mile.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RII Georgia RII

462 the Khevsur woman, and executes field work besides the housework.[13]

On the other hand, "among the Svans[14] woman is not oppressed, "she takes care only of the work about the home. In comparison[15] with the other mountaineers of the Caucasus, the Svans recognize in woman a considerable amount of independence. Among Balkars and Ossetes, all the work at home, as well as in the fields, is done by women; not so with the Svans, among whom woman enjoys much more leisure." Contrary to the above stated views are the views of the French investigator, R. Bernoville, in his description of the position of the Svan woman, which, however, does not correspond to reality. "La femme, traitée sans grand respect, je le crains," he writes,[16] "est cependant libre, et son attitude respire en général une certain indépendance d'allures. Seulement le Souane, fort paresseux de son natural, se décharge volontiers sur elle des travaux pénibles des champs." The women of the Svans take care of the housework, and also help the men in the field work.[17] The men plough, sow and harrow; the women mellow the soil. Hay is sown by the men and gathered by the women; harvesting is done by both sexes together.

462 Besides these differences in the manual work at home and in the fields, there are also other differences between man and woman in the communities of the Georgian Highlanders as expressed in possession of rights and the performance of duties. Woman is excluded from inheritance rights; she is totally ignored in some cases or counted as only half a man in the payment of blood money (the *wergild*) during a blood-feud. Her rights in divorce are limited; she is not admitted to a witness stand at judicial proceedings, is regarded as unclean, and is barred from entering the sanctuary of the community and from taking part in the religious festivals and holidays on an equal footing with men. In spite of all these restrictions of her actions and rights, she was never a "slave," or a "beast of burden," or a "chattel" of her husband's.

[13] Khakhanov: a, 52.
[14] Teptsov: a, 53.
[15] Kovalevsky: a, II, 49.
[16] Bernoville: 106.
[17] Dmitriev: 180.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

The opinion expressed by many investigators and travelers who have visited the communities of the Georgian Highlanders, and deplore the degrading, humiliating position of the women. For example, R. D. Eristov writes about Khevsurs that "in general, they regard their women as slaves, and treat them roughly, without any feeling of kindness or attachment."[18] We think that such opinions do not coincide with reality. Many factors were in play in the process of creating the conditions of life and rights of the Georgian Highlander woman, among them the socio-psychological, political, economic, and historical being the most important, and we may as well add that any general statement concerning the question of the position of woman among the Georgian Highlanders or in any other primitive society "must be taken with caution," because "it should be noted that the treatment of woman is one thing, her legal status another, her opportunities for public activity still another, while the character and extent of her labors belong again to a distinct category."[19] So that in reality, as we see, the woman of the Georgian Highlanders possesses parallel with the above-enumerated limitations in her rights, also such privileges which are not only equal but much superior to those exercised by man. For example, we see that, although the position of the Khevsur woman was apparently degrading, she enjoyed prerogatives that were denied to man. Though she was not an heiress in the family, she had a right to have her own personal capital (*sathavno*), which was not permitted to man, whose personal property was very scanty. More than this, the woman could reach a position in the social group where she was not only equal to man, but even superior to him—that is, when she was regarded as a holy being. Although the woman is regarded as unclean from the religious viewpoint, at the same time the people believe that the deity (*Khati*) has a special esteem for women, or, to use the Khevsur expression, *Khats kalis khatri akvs*, meaning literally in English: "Khati woman's esteem has." Consequently she occupies different offices or diviners, such as: *mlotsavi, mkitkhavi, mesultane*, and even *kadagi*, when, according to the people's opinion, she is in direct contact with the spirits

[18] Eristov: 113.
[19] Lowie: a, 186; Hobhouse: 167-78.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1
Tush

562 and deities. Besides this, woman has full right to vote and take part equally with man in the family conferences, where she expresses her views, which are taken into consideration and many times accepted and followed. She mingles freely with men, takes part in their discussions, jokes, keeps herself without reserve, but at the same time does not lose her dignity.[20]

The personal rights of woman were protected by her kin, and for every mistreatment of his wife without any motive from her part, the Khevsur husband was responsible before her kinsfolk. "In Keinem Falle," writes Merzbacher[21] concerning this matter, "aber ist dem Manne gestatted, seine Frau schlecht zu behandeln. Hierfuer ist er der ganzem Gemeinde verantwortlich."

Concerning the Tush women, they are more reserved than their Khevsur and Pshav sisters. "Every honest woman is expected to be a good house-keeper, modest and shy," writes A. L. Zisserman about the Tush woman.[22] The Tush woman is characterized in the same way by Professor A. Khakhanov. "Woman among the Tushes is prominent with her shy and modest character," he writes.[23] "She hides herself from an unexpected guest, talks only with her relatives and intimate acquaintances, and in general the less free she is in her behaviour, the higher her personal qualities are rated." This reserved position of woman among the Tushes 562 101 in comparison with that of the other Georgian Highlanders may be explained through two main causes: economic and historico-political. The occupation of the people is principally pastoral; they have large flocks of sheep and most of the time the men are absent from their homes, so that the women are obliged to perform, besides the work about the house, the field work also. The second cause may be ascribed to the geographical position of the country. Tushetia adjoins the rich Georgian province of Kakhetia, and is nearer and more accessible to the political and cultural center (Tiflis). Consequently, besides many other influences, there was the Islamic influence affecting the status of

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[20] Gurko-Kriajin: 281.
[21] Merzbacher: II, 70.
[22] Zisserman: 254.
[23] Khakhanov: a, 52.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

woman, and placing her, among the Tushes, in a more reserved position than among the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Svans.

The personal and social rights of woman among the Svans were much higher than among other Georgian Highlanders. The Svan woman is not shy and reserved. Mr. Bakradze[24] relates that he "was delighted with the ease and freedom of their manners," and he adds: "They entered into conversation with me, joked, waited upon me, and flirted." There is no ground to regard the Svan woman as devoid of all rights.[25] Subordinated to her husband, she enjoys at the same time considerable privileges in the matter of her personal and property rights. And as for her social position, it should be noted that the Svans, more than any other peoples of the Caucasus, allow their women to take the witness stand and even to be mediators during judicial proceedings. The women of Svanetia often take that high stand in the social life which was given to women among the ancient Germans, who called women *Friedenwebe* (peace-web), meaning peace-making, because of their ability to bring about peace among the hostile tribes. Women[26] often stopped the blood-feuds and killings between inimical parties. This conciliatory role of woman was especially prominent among the Khevsurs and Tushes, who had great respect for the woman's head-dress, the shawl, called *mandili,* which is worn only by married women.

Mandili has an important meaning in the eyes of the mountaineers,[27] it is regarded among the Tushes as inviodable and even as a sacred object. More than once the *mandili* put an end to quarrels and bloody encounters between hostile families. It is sufficient for a woman to take off her *mandili* and put it before the feet of an enraged mountaineer, for he is then obliged to put his brandishing dagger in the scabbard at once, and retire. Describing this custom among the same Tushes, Zisserman[28] regards it as "remarkable, chivalrous respect of woman." The same custom of respecting woman's *mandili* was and is observed also among

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[24] Bakradze: 45.
[25] Kovalevsky: a, II, 51-2.
[26] Stoianov: 435.
[27] Khakhanov: a, 52.
[28] Zisserman: 252.

6. Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

the Khevsurs.[29] In order to stop the fighting men from bloodshed the Khevsur women kneel between them, and with the words "Lords! Heroes!, so we ask you!" they throw their *mandili* on the ground before the feet of the men, who immediately cease the brawl. Many investigators regard this custom as a survival of the formerly-existing matriarchate among the Khevsurs. All attempts to find out from the Khevsurs the meaning of this custom are futile.[30] On the question as to why they are obliged to do this, "the Khevsurs can not answer or give any explanation."

Not only in customs, but even in the current expressions of the Georgian language, preference is given to woman before man. When speaking about a male and female together, the Georgian gives the female the first place always. For example, one says "mother and father" (*ded-mama*)—from the words, *deda* (mother) and *mama* (father)—but one never says "father and mother." The Georgian says *da-dzma* (*da*—sister; *dzma*—brother), but not "brother and sister"; also, female and male (*kal—vaji; kali,* female; *vaji,* male), but not "male and female"; wife and husband (*tsol-kmari—tsoli*—wife; *kmari*—husband), but never "husband and wife."

In every-day speech, in poetry, in music and song, and even in dancing, the Georgian glorifies the beauty and attributes of the feminine sex. In every gathering, on all occasions, during work or idleness, in all corners of the country, even in the secluded glacier regions, the Georgians sing; and among their songs of warfare and courage there are always the songs of passionate love and the praise of woman's beauty. The woman, on the other hand, attained her esteemed position not only by her beauty, but also by her personal qualities which often gave her the leading role in the destiny of the nation and the country. The personality of the brilliant Queen Tamar of the Georgians may be mentioned as an example. She was called by her people the "King," "King Tamar"—*Tamar-mepe* (*mepe*—king), for her great achievements and personal abilities. The time of her reign (1184-1212) represents the golden age of Georgian history. In every corner

[29] Eristov: 127.
[30] Gurko-Kriajin: 272.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

of Georgia, among every ethnic group—in the secluded glacier regions of the rough Highlanders as well as among the easy-going and cultured Lowlanders—the people sing national songs praising "King" Thamar—(*Thamar-mepe*) and her glory, which was the glory of Georgia. For example, D. W. Freshfield[21] relates of his Svan guides that they "chanted a ballad with a refrain of 'Thamara, Thamara,' in honour of their queen." And in the person of every Georgian mother, the country had its most zealous defenders of its sovereignty, its language and culture.

[21] Freshfield: II, 12.

POSITION OF WOMEN

C. G. 562 The position of women in the Caucasus was in many respects subordinate to that of men: male children were preferred, descent was patrilineal, residence patrilocal, women were excluded from inheritance rights; in case the headwoman was unable to reconcile a quarrel among the female members of the family, the case was put before the headman; divorces C G [684] were in general more easily obtained by men than by women, and in the case of adultery the husband had the right to kill or disfigure his wife. The Circassian code of behavior forbade women to sit down while men were standing, and the husband was addressed in terms of respect by his wife. In most areas the women C G [967] led a life of hard work; besides doing the housework, they also assisted in the work in the field, though certain activities such as tending horses and in most cases ploughing were performed by men only. Among the Georgian mountaineers, women were regarded from a religious point of view as unclean, and were forbidden to enter the walled precincts C. G. of the sanctuaries; the Svan had sexual avoid- [834] ance rules to ensure success in hunting expeditions; in Mingrelia a woman may not kill a chicken or animal she is going to prepare, as this would spoil the food.

G. 562 In spite of these restrictions on her actions and rights, the Caucasian woman enjoyed more privileges than her sisters in other parts of the Near East, and she was held in higher esteem than in most societies. In Eastern Georgia, where Persian influence has been strong, and in general in the political and cultural centers, the women led a comparatively sheltered life. But where the indigenous Caucasian culture is better preserved, farther from the centers and especially in the mountain areas, women enjoyed a large degree of freedom. Besides playing an important role in the life of the family, they also engaged in public activities, could have their say in community gatherings, take the witness stand and even be mediators in judicial proceedings. Perhaps more important than legal status is the chivalrous respect for women which is characteristic of the Caucasian. No Circassian, however enraged, would start a fight in the presence of a woman, and the intercession of a woman during a fight or drunken brawl among the Khevsur - by throwing her head-cloth (mandili) before the feet of the combatants - would immediately separate them. The same respect is apparent in the customs relating to adoption, in folklore, and, curiously, in the Georgian language, where when male and female are mentioned together, the female always takes the first place: ded-mama "mother and father" (deda

7:Columbia U. S-4, 5 1956 RHl Caucasia
RHl
Georgia RI 1
C.
G.
562

"mother," mama "father"!), tsol-kmari "wife and husband," da-dzma "sister and brother," kal-vazhi "daughter and son."